



Holiday Leave Safety



The holiday period, Thanksgiving through New Year's, is one of our most anticipated times of year. As NCO leaders, as you prepare for the holidays, think about safety and risk management before your teammates begin their leave. As Soldiers, we know and follow standards 24/7. As leaders, we take care of our people 24/7. Safety is the most precious gift we can give this holiday season.

– SMA Michael Grinston

TOP LINE MESSAGES

DATE: November – January 2021

- The holiday leave period begins 20 Nov 2021, the week before Thanksgiving, and ends 7 January 2022, the full week after New Year's Day.
- The holiday leave period is the second-deadliest time of year for off-duty Soldier mishaps. Only the summer months have more recorded fatalities annually.
- The Army loses approximately 11 Soldiers during the holiday season, with most at the rank of PFC or SPC. An average of nine to 10 fatalities occur in private motor vehicles (PMVs).

SUMMARY

PMV mishaps result in more Soldier fatalities than any other type of mishap - not just during the holidays, but year-round. The risk posed by driving in winter weather conditions and around active wildlife, while important to mitigate, are secondary to the "get-home-itis" many Soldiers will experience once their leave date rolls around. Behavior-based errors — speeding, failure to wear seat belts, fatigue — are the most prevalent factors in PMV mishaps, with alcohol use being the greatest contributing factor in holiday leave fatalities.

TALKING POINTS

Monitor your alcohol consumption:

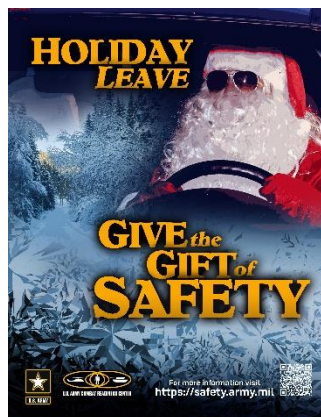
- The hazards of drinking during the holidays are different from other times of year, due primarily to proximity and opportunity. Alcohol is more readily available, and with time off, Soldiers could be tempted to drink past their limits.
- Drinking can lead to a cascade of indiscipline. Alcohol involved with speeding and failure to wear a seat belt are the most prevalent combinations reported in Army PMV mishaps year-round, not just during the holidays.
- At least 25 percent of Army holiday exodus mishap fatalities during the past five fiscal years involved alcohol. That number could be higher due to delays in reporting from civilian law enforcement agencies.
- Privately owned weapons (POWs) and alcohol are a particularly deadly mix. All fatal POW mishaps reported Army-wide the past five holiday seasons involved alcohol. Drinking is also reported in the majority of Army POW fatalities year-round.

Tools are available.

- First-line supervisors counseling Soldiers prior to leave or pass saves lives. Highly effective for first term Soldiers or Soldiers who have just purchased their first vehicle. While no longer an Army requirement, the Travel Risk Planning System (<https://trips.safety.army.mil>) provides leaders a platform to engage their Soldiers on PMV and travel safety.
- The Off-Duty Safety Awareness Presentation (<https://safety.army.mil/odsap>) has proven effective for leaders looking to talk to their Soldiers beyond the standard safety brief. Each stand-alone, off-duty safety topic may be briefed individually or as a whole to accommodate training schedules.
- Small Unit Leader Cards provide mishap stats and talking points to engage Soldiers on off-duty safety and risk management. They are customizable to highlight high-risk areas local to the installation. Download at: (<https://safety.army.mil/OFF-DUTY/Small-Unit-Leader-Cards>)

Engaged and effective leaders, even while away from their subordinates, are able to influence behaviors:

- A safe, mishap-free holiday begins well before Soldiers begin their travels.
- Data from the Army Readiness Assessment Program (ARAP) shows that units that prioritize safety and implement an effective safety culture experience fewer off-duty mishaps.
- Check your unit's ARAP's status at: (<https://arap.safety.army.mil/>)



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